

Minnesota

Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

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Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Minnesota is administered by The Department of Human Services (DHS), Children and Family Services (CFS). Minnesota's DHS adoption link: www.dhs.state.mn.us/CFS/Programs/Adoption/default.htm.

- 1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? (*"What is your state definition of special needs?"*)**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- A member of a sibling group to be placed as one unit in which at least one sibling is older than 15 months of age or is described below
- A documented physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities
- A high risk of developing physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities

Note: When an infant's eligibility for adoption assistance is based on a high risk of developing physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities, it is known as "high-risk adoption assistance". High-risk adoption assistance payments are not made under the adoption assistance agreement unless and until the potential disability manifests itself as documented by an appropriate health care professional.

- 2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above.

- 3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$2,000.00

- 4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Minnesota offers deferred adoption assistance. When an infant's eligibility for adoption assistance is based on a high risk of developing physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities, payments shall not be made under the adoption assistance agreement unless and until the potential disability manifests itself as documented by an appropriate health care professional.

- 5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?**

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Minnesota after adoption finalization.

6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

A request for a change in the adoption assistance agreement can be made at any time if the child's condition or circumstances change. Adoptive parents are directed to send a written letter to the Department to request modification of the adoption assistance agreement and provide documentation to support the modification request. If a child eligible for high-risk adoption assistance, meaning that they are at high risk of developing a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability, develops such a disability, the adoption assistance agreement could be amended to include cash payments (such as basic maintenance need or supplemental maintenance need) and nonmedical services (such as child care, respite care, etc.) If the adoptive parent(s) of a child receiving adoption assistance dies, the adoption assistance for the child may be transferred to the child's guardian.

Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services

7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post adoption services in Minnesota are administered and accessed through Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation (MN ASAP) and include the following examples:

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| 1. Child care | 4. Website information | 7. Parent liaisons |
| 2. Respite | 5. Newsletter | 8. Post adoption service grants |
| 3. Training | 6. Support groups | |

Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation link: www.mnasap.org/. Expenses for services outlined in the adoption assistance agreement (child care, respite care, etc.) are reimbursed by the state. Post adoption services grant reimbursements are also made by the state.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or state post adoption services contact for process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance

8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Public mental health services for children in Minnesota are administered through DHS Children and Family Services' Children's Mental Health and includes the following examples: education and prevention services, mental health identification and intervention services, emergency services, outpatient services, family community support services, day treatment services, residential treatment services, acute care hospital inpatient treatment services, prescription drugs, screening, case management, therapeutic support of foster care, and professional home-based family treatment. Minnesota Children and Family Services Children's Mental Health link: www.dhs.state.mn.us/CFS/programs/childmentalhealth/default.htm. Or phone DHS Children's Mental Health at 651.297.5242 or contact Glenace Edwall, Director, at 651.215.1382 or e-mail glenace.edwall@state.mn.us. Medicaid coverage is secondary to any private insurance of the adoptive family.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Minnesota offers what is known as funding for *Special Non-medical Needs*. Assistance is available for services or items considered necessary to meet the special needs of the child. Examples of such services and items include: post-adoption counseling, respite, childcare, camps, communication equipment, physical alterations made to accommodate a child's special need(s), and burial expenses under certain circumstances up to a set maximum.

Minnesota offers grants to families who adopted special needs children under certain circumstances. If a child who had a special need at the time of placement, or was at risk of developing such a need, was adopted without adoption assistance, grants are available to offset financial hardship experienced in meeting the child's special needs. Minnesota allocates \$50,000 per fiscal year for these grants and grants are available for up to \$10,000. All other resources must be exhausted for a family to be eligible under the grant. Adoptive families are directed to contact their local social service agency to apply for these funds.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings

10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

Adoptive parents have the right to request a fair hearing any time they experience a denial, modification, or termination of the adoption assistance agreement. The request for fair hearing must be in writing within thirty days after receiving written notice of the contested action or decision from the Department, or within ninety days if the parents can show good cause why the request was not given within the thirty-day time limit. Requests for fair hearing are made in writing by letter to Laurie Ruhl at the following address:

Department of Human Services
Family and Children Services Division
444 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3831

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

Minnesota's general adoption link: www.dhs.state.mn.us/CFS/Programs/Adoption/default.htm

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

Minnesota's adoption assistance link: <http://edocs2.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-3321-ENG>

For additional languages, go to www.dhs.state.mn.us/CFS/Programs/Adoption/default.htm and see the paragraph entitled, “How does the Minnesota Department of Human Services help?” for a link to the *Adoption Assistance Program for Children with Special Needs*.

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

Minnesota’s state-specific medical assistance link: www.dhs.state.mn.us/HealthCare/asstprog/mmap.htm and county Medicaid contact information: www.dhs.state.mn.us/HealthCare/county-numbers.htm